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CIRCUMNAVIGATING SPITSBERGEN | IN THE REALM OF THE POLAR BEAR 13 DAY EXPEDITION

Crossing the 80th parallel north This epic expedition cruise will see us attempt to find a way through the sea ice to venture above the 80th parallel and explore the ice edge. Ice conditions permitting, our goal is to successfully complete a circumnavigation of the island of Spitsbergen, discovering incredible Arctic wildlife and breathtaking scenery. Land of the polar bear Your adventure takes you to Longyearbyen, Northwest Spitsbergen National Park, the breathtaking Hornsund mountains and the stunning Bellsund. Venturing into the realm of the polar bear, take in the scenic panoramas as we scout for these elusive predators and other wildlife like Arctic foxes and Svalbard reindeer.

ITINERARY

Day 1 Explore cosmopolitan Oslo

Enjoy time in Oslo before flying to Svalbard

Your expedition begins in Oslo, Norway's fjord-side capital. If you have time, why not explore the city centre on your own.

With its rich history and fashionable art scene, Oslo is a fascinating city. You'll find museums, galleries, and breathtaking architecture - including the beautiful Opera House and new Munch Museum.

Take a stroll in the Ekebergparken sculpture park, visit Akershus Fortress or relax in a floating sauna. Explore modern Sørenga and enjoy urban beach life or try New Nordic cuisine before spending the night in your airport hotel in Oslo.

Day 2-4 Welcome to Longyearbyen

Get to know the town at the top of the world

After a morning flight from Oslo, your adventure begins with two nights in the world's northernmost town. A colourful frontier settlement where people are outnumbered by snowmobiles, you'll discover that Longyearbyen is a unique place on the edge of the Arctic wilderness.

Spend the next two-and-a-half days exploring Longyearbyen and

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its surroundings. The town is perfect for getting around on foot - stroll down the main street and you might see Svalbard reindeer saunter by. But don't worry, although wild, they're curious and tame.

To give you a wider look, local guides will take you on an e-bike tour of the area and present the historic backdrop to the town at the top of the world.

From the expedition centre you'll head out of town and along an unpaved road to Hotellneset, which has a lake and showcases the remnants of the area's mining past. Svalbard's very first hotel was built here by Hurtigruten pioneer Richard With before the modern town we see today had even been constructed.

We'll then head back into Longyearbyen along the 'Burma Road', which was an important link for coal being shipped from the harbour, enjoying panoramic views as we ride. Sights along the way include an old funicular, the historic Svalbard Church and the ruined remains of the original Longyearbyen, which was bombed during WWII.

From here we'll continue under the steep cliffs of the Plateau Mountain, passing the graveyard and the iconic Huset - a building which has been everything from a cinema to bar, school and church. We will continue on to Coal Miners' Cabins, the original miners' home, and enjoy a relaxed lunch before completing our tour and returning to the hotel.

On Day 4 you'll have the morning to finish off looking around Longyearbyen before boarding the ship in the afternoon and beginning our expedition cruise.

Day 5 Peaceful Ny-Ålesund

Experience science, serenity and epic scenery

Today you'll discover the serenity of Ny-Ålesund and neighbouring fjords such as Krossfjord and Kongsfjord. Disconnect and enjoy a day without distractions as the Norwegian Mapping Authority's nearby geodetic station means we must switch off Wi-Fi and Bluetooth.

One of the northernmost settlements and a former mining town, Ny-Ålesund was the starting point for Roald Amundsen's expeditions north with the airship 'Norge'. Now a hub for global science and climate research, you can still see remnants of the town's history.

You'll be immersed in rugged, glacial scenery as we explore the fjords around Ny-Ålesund. Be ready for adventure; we'll seize any opportunity to launch our small expedition boats, go ashore to hike or cruise by majestic glaciers.

Day 6-7 Expedition days

Experience pristine Arctic wilderness

Over the next three days, you'll explore the natural beauty and rugged tundra of Northwest Spitsbergen National Park. In this wilderness of steep mountains, stark glaciers and beautiful offshore islands, we'll scan for animals of the Arctic - whales, seals, walruses and reindeer. If we're really lucky, we might even see the elusive polar bear from the Observation Deck of the ship. In stunning Kongsfjord, you may see impressive glaciers calving into the sea.

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Be ready for adventure; we'll seize any opportunity to launch our kayaks or use our small expedition boats and go ashore to hike or participate in a beach clean-up.

Day 8 Ice edge attempt

Experience the opportunity of sailing to the edge of the polar ice cap

If conditions allow, we'll sail north and cross the 80th parallel to explore the ever-changing ice edge. The transition zone between the ice cap and the sea is a magical yet ephemeral place where the waters are filled with ice floes and drifting pack ice. From the ship there are great opportunities here for spotting wildlife, such as seals and walrus who lounge photogenically on the sparkling ice. And if the conditions are right, we'll lower our expedition boats into the water and enjoy an unforgettable close-up experience amid the floating ice.

The ice edge isn't a fixed boundary, and it moves depending on the season and conditions, so visiting it will be an attempt rather than a certainty. From May to August, as summer progresses, it retreats further towards the pole, meaning it may be out of reach for us. If this is the case then we'll instead explore the no-less-impressive deep fjords, mighty glaciers and enchanting scenery of the Svalbard coast. In late July and into August, this is a time when the wildflowers appear, blanketing the landscape with a blaze of beauty and colour.

Day 9-10 Eastern Spitsbergen

Scouting for polar bears, seabirds and walrus

Be ready for anything as this stage of your voyage continues to be truly adventurous. If sea ice permits, we'll venture to the frozen seascape of Eastern Spitsbergen.

We have high hopes you'll see the elusive polar bear over the next two days. We'll also scout for walrus and colonies of Brunnich's Guillemots and other seabirds in the Hinlopen Strait. We may head south to Freemansundet and Kapp Lee or take our small expedition boats to Edgeøya or Barentsøya.

In true expedition style, exactly where we'll go will depend on the conditions on the day. Channel your inner explorer on exhilarating landings, hikes and kayak trips.

And if the ice doesn't allow us to pass through Hinlopen Strait, you'll experience just as much adventure as we delve deeper into the wonders of western Svalbard. We'll take a flexible route through deep fjords and by calving glaciers, seeking out remarkable Arctic wildlife.

Day 11-12 Hornsund and Bellsund

Majestic glaciers, birds and pioneer history

Your expedition cruise continues south towards Hornsund - one of Svalbard's most beautiful fjords. Rich, colourful vegetation makes way for towering mountains along this picturesque waterway. Head out on deck to spot seals and whales, Mount Hornsundtind, and glaciers calving into the sea.

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Then we head to snowcapped mountains of Bellsund, whose cliffs are home to large colonies of auks, guillemots and Northern Fulmars, along with Arctic foxes and Svalbard reindeer below. Look out for the early mining settlements here and learn about Wanny Woldstad, the first female trapper.

Our activities will be determined by the ever-changing weather conditions of Hornsund and Bellsund. Your Expedition Team will decide on the best possibilities for exploring on the day.

Day 13 Return to Longyearbyen

A final day on top of the world

Your Arctic adventure comes to an end back in Longyearbyen. A transfer will take you to the airport for your flight to Oslo. You'll return home knowing more about Arctic animals, history, polar ice and climate change than you arrived with - and memories of an incredible experience.

If you're not ready to say goodbye just yet, why not spend some more time in the Arctic and join our optional Post-Programme.

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



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YOUR SHIP: FRAM

YOUR SHIP:

Fram

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

MS Fram is designed for sailing in polar waters, holds the highest safety standards and is the perfect size for optimum nautical manoeuvrability and guests' comfort. With space for only 276 guests, you are sure to get to know many of your fellow travellers. You will share stunning sights and memories of a lifetime long after returning home. The Norwegian word Fram means 'forward' - lifting expectations of the voyage at hand. MS Fram was built in 2007 with one mission in mind - to bring her guests closer to nature, wildlife and unforgettable experiences. As well as offering numerous lounges in which to relax, our more active guests can use our well-equipped gym. Meanwhile, on deck, our Jacuzzis guarantee you surreal memories when passing the towering icebergs of Antarctica or Greenland.



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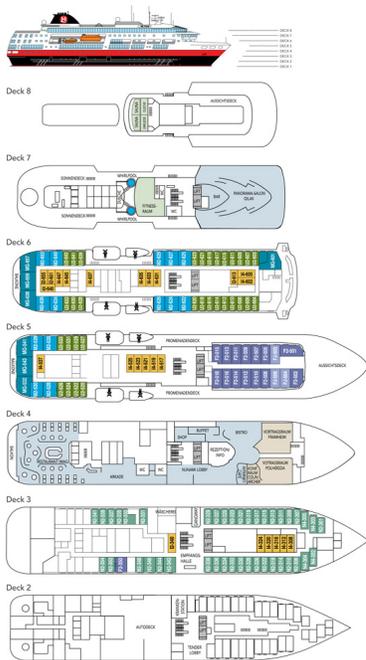
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PRICING

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